



California Department of Education

# California School Recognition Program 2003 Distinguished Middle School Application Package

**What's Included:** Instructions for Completing the Application  
Distinguished Middle School Application Form

**Return by:** Friday, December 20, 2002, 5:00 p.m.

**Mail to:** Karen Heiner, Awards Unit  
California School Recognition Program  
California Department of Education  
1430 N Street, Suite 4206  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Note:  
Applications will not  
be accepted by e-mail  
or by Fax.

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**Deliver to:** Security Desk, Lobby  
8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Week of December 16<sup>th</sup> only  
California Department of Education  
1430 N Street  
Sacramento

**Web site:** [www.cde.ca.gov/ope/csrp/](http://www.cde.ca.gov/ope/csrp/)

**Questions:** Awards Unit  
916-319-0866



## Instructions for Completing the Application

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### INTENTION TO SUBMIT

The “*Intention to Submit*” notification from schools will enable us to validate eligibility, marshal our resources based upon the anticipated number of applications, and screen potential competitors for unresolved legal compliance issues or discrimination complaints. Decisions regarding the eligibility of schools with unresolved compliance or complaint issues will be made by the California Department of Education (CDE) on a case-by-case basis.

The “*Intention to Submit*” document is due by Friday, November 29, 2002, or as soon thereafter as possible. This document may also be downloaded from our Web site. It is preferred that the notifications be mailed because of the volume anticipated. However, if you prefer, your *Intention* may be faxed to (916) 319-0153. *To avoid duplicate submissions, when notifications are faxed, the California School Recognition Program (CSRP) Office does not need the original to be mailed.*

### APPLICATION DIRECTIONS

**PAPER, SPACING AND FONTS**—All responses must be printed on standard 8-1/2" by 11" *white paper*, single spaced, with 3/4" margins on right, left, top, and bottom. Use single spacing between lines. Do not use compressed type and make sure that the font style is optimally readable (11 point minimum).

**SEQUENCE AND PAGINATION**—Number all pages as follows:

Cover page	p. 1
Collaborative Preparation of the Application	p. 2 (2a, if necessary)
Section I, Background and Demographic Data	pp. 3-6 (3a, 4a, 5a, 6a, if necessary)
Directions to Your School	p. 7
Section II, School Synopsis (a maximum of one page)	p. 8
Section III, Program Criteria: School Programs and Processes	
Questions 1-10 (a maximum of 14 pages)	pp. 9-22

**SPACE LIMITATIONS**—Space limitations for the narrative sections will be strictly enforced. Please confine Section II—*School Synopsis*, to one page. If your school is selected as a Distinguished School, the *School Synopsis* will be provided to media upon request. The primary narrative responses, Section III—Program Criteria: *School Programs and Processes*, may not exceed fourteen (14) pages. If a full page is not used for one question, that space may be used for another question.

It is acceptable and common to include color graphics, photos, etc., in the narrative. However, if a school adds pages or other attachments beyond those allowed in the application instructions, the additional pages and/or attachments will be removed before the readers evaluate the application.

**COPIES**—Each school is required to provide eight (8) copies of the entire Distinguished School Application (an original plus seven copies, each printed back-to-back). The original and copies must be stapled in the upper left hand corner and submitted without decorative covers or bindings.

The application is designed to provide a description of your school’s educational programs and the community that it serves. The presentation should accurately reflect the background and demographic data described in Section I of the application. Remember that the information will be validated during a site visit if your school is selected as a statewide nominee.

## Instructions for Completing the Application

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**COVER PAGE**—The cover page of the application must include the official name of your school as it would be announced to the media and engraved on your award plaque if your school is selected as a California Distinguished School. Current school and district contact information must be provided on this page.

The 14-digit CDS code is the official county-district-school code by which your school is referenced in all state databases. The CDS code is available from your district office, or may be found in the *2002 California Public School Directory*.

Note that the cover page for the application requires the signatures of the principal and the district superintendent (or an authorized designee). The people signing the document certify that they have reviewed the content of the application and certify that it is accurate.

The names of your *State Assembly Member* and *State Senator* are requested so that the CDE can notify them if your school is selected as a California Distinguished School. Most legislators provide additional recognition honors to the award winners in their districts. The CDE also informs U.S. Senators Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer of the Distinguished School Award winners, and those offices also send congratulations.

**COLLABORATIVE PREPARATION OF THE APPLICATION**—Principals are expected to invite a team of individuals who represent the entire school community—administrators, teachers, staff, family members, community members and organizations, business partners, and students—to participate in the preparation of the application. Many of the questions will require reflection, research, discussion, and consensus among the team. Information about the development of the school narrative and who participated is required on page 2 of the application and is considered in scoring. If your school is selected as a statewide nominee, you should be prepared to invite a representative sample of the people listed to be interviewed by the review team in order to validate the application.

### SECTION I

**BACKGROUND AND DEMOGRAPHIC DATA**—This section of the application is designed to provide the evaluator with accurate, up-to-date information about your school and the community it serves. This information includes: geographic location (urban, rural, etc.); numbers of students, the ethnic composition of your student population, languages spoken; students receiving special services, student discipline data; number of teachers, administrators, and classrooms; and, school facilities. *Note that the application directs you to provide information from your most recent CBEDS submission, unless there have been significant changes in your student population since it was last reported.*

This information will provide the reader with a comprehensive context in which to evaluate the narrative description of your school's learning environment and educational programs. The scoring rubric used for evaluating applications specifically refers readers to this demographic data in some questions. A school will not be "penalized" if there are no (or very few) English learners or other special needs students present. Clearly describe your situation for the evaluator so there are no misunderstandings.

**SCHOOL DIRECTIONS**—The application requests that you provide travel directions to your school to be used by the site visit review team members if your school is selected as a statewide nominee. The site visit team will be scheduled by your county office of education and will typically include a combination of county office staff and educators from counties or school districts other than your own.

## Instructions for Completing the Application

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### SECTION II

**SCHOOL SYNOPSIS**—Provide a brief summary of the highlights of your school which will assist the evaluator by defining a context for the information presented in Section III—Program Criteria: *School Programs and Processes*.

### SECTION III

**PROGRAM CRITERIA**—The overall framework of selection criteria for the California School Recognition Program is contained in the application questions and the corresponding pages of the scoring rubric. Each page of the scoring rubric presents quality statements with which to judge each of the application questions in Section III. The application questions are repeated at the top of each corresponding scoring rubric page. The criteria are organized into ten categories:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. <i>Vision and Standards</i>                            | 6. <i>School Culture</i>                                   |
| 2. <i>Student Assessment</i>                              | 7. <i>Comprehensive Academic and Guidance Counseling</i>   |
| 3. <i>Curriculum and Instructional Practices</i>          | 8. <i>Students At-Risk and With Special Needs</i>          |
| 4. <i>Teacher Professionalism</i>                         | 9. <i>Safe and Healthy School and Coordinated Services</i> |
| 5. <i>Education Technology and Library Media Services</i> | 10. <i>Family Participation and Community Partnerships</i> |

**FORMAT**—Each response must be numbered and the question restated for the reader. However, when restating the questions, *it is not necessary to include the italicized examples*, and a smaller font may be used than is used in the body of the text. The prompts in italics that accompany the application questions are intended to guide responses. Pay special attention to any such italicized requests for information because evaluators will expect to find information directly related to these structured questions. Applications will not be rejected for minor deviations from the prescribed format. However, if such deviations make the application more difficult to read, they may place the application at a disadvantage with the evaluators.

**ELEMENTS OF A STRONG RESPONSE**—The application should accurately describe your school and the community it serves, and reflect the school demographics described in Section I. The information will be subject to validation during a site visit if the school is selected as a statewide nominee.

In order to receive a high score, it is important to make sure that all parts of each question are answered (i.e., each area of the rubric addressed). Include specific examples to support your responses. Provide a vivid, illustrative example or description for the evaluator to “picture” what happens at the school, why, and who is involved, etc.—not generalized statements such as “we do that.” Restating the language in the rubric or including generalized statements will generate a rating of “two” on the four-point rubric.

The application questions consistently direct writers to “use school-specific examples and other evidence to support the description.” Such evidence may include, but is not limited to: statistics and other quantitative data; examples of how a program or activity operates; who does what; who was affected; anecdotes, quotes, citations, etc. Quantitative data always strengthen responses—“Last school year, our volunteer logs documented that over 60,000 hours were volunteered by families and community members. Volunteer activities included x, y, and z” presents far more information than “There is a high level of parent involvement.”

**CROSS-REFERENCING**—The school’s writing team will decide how much space to allocate to each response within the overall limitation of fourteen (14) pages. In order to make maximum use of limited space, do not repeat the same information for different questions. Because many of the questions are

## Instructions for Completing the Application

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closely related as the issues are in the “real life” of a school, it is recommended that you cross-reference to conserve space and avoid repetition. However, you should address the question clearly before referring to additional information in related questions and specify its location for the evaluator. Many evaluators are unwilling to spend a substantial amount of time “searching” through an application for evidence not contained in a response or reference.

**EDITING**—A competitive application process, by nature, gives preference to a clear and concise writing style. It is strongly recommended that one person with superior writing skills edit the application, with input from representative groups within the school community. There must be schoolwide input, written by a collaborative group, but the final application should speak to the reader with a “single voice.”

The quality of the written presentation influences the reviewers’ assessment. Therefore, it is important to designate a competent editor to assist with the final document. The collaborative preparation of the application page requests the names and titles of those who participated.

The principal of each school is responsible for ensuring the accuracy and completeness of the final document. The principal should personally ensure that: 1) all nomination questions have been fully and accurately answered; 2) formatting of the nomination complies with the Technical Specifications; 3) photocopying has not resulted in missing or non-sequential pages; and, 4) that shipment of all eight (8) copies occurs according to the prescribed timeline.

**SUBMITTING THE APPLICATION**—The 2003 Distinguished School application must be received in the CDE by 5:00 PM on Friday, December 20. *The application cannot be accepted by e-mail.* We recommend that you send the application package by registered mail, Federal Express, or another method that allows the package to be tracked in the event it goes astray during the holiday mail season. The mailing address is listed below.

Karen Heiner, Awards Unit  
California School Recognition Program  
California Department of Education  
1430 N Street, Suite 4206  
Sacramento, CA 95814

For schools that prefer to hand-carry their applications to the CDE, the security desk on the first floor of the Education Building is accessible between the hours of 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM. A special bin will be designated for Distinguished School Application drop-off the week of December 16<sup>th</sup>, or you are welcome to visit the CSRP office on the fourth floor of the Education Building. Directions and suggestions for parking are posted on the CSRP Web site at: [www.cde.ca.gov/ope/csrp/](http://www.cde.ca.gov/ope/csrp/)

**PRELIMINARY REVIEW AND CONFIRMATION OF APPLICATIONS**—Applications will be screened for completeness by the California School Recognition Program staff. If covers, attachments, or additional pages of narrative are added beyond those specified, the additional pages and/or attachments will be removed before the evaluators read the application.

The CSRP office will not be confirming the receipt of your application. However, we will contact you if additional information is needed or if the format is unacceptable. *Therefore, it is extremely important that you designate a contact person during the holiday break and provide an alternate telephone number so the CDE can promptly resolve any problems in the application.*



California Department of Education

# California School Recognition Program

## 2003 DISTINGUISHED MIDDLE SCHOOL APPLICATION

### Check Box if Applicable:

- ☐ Previously honored as a California Distinguished School? Year(s): \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Previously honored as a National Blue Ribbon School? Year(s): \_\_\_\_\_

CDS Code: \_\_\_\_\_ County:   District:      School:

Official School Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(If your school receives an award, this name will be used for the News Release and will be engraved on the award plaque.)

County \_\_\_\_\_

District \_\_\_\_\_

School Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City and Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

(Area Code) School Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_

(Area Code) School Fax Number \_\_\_\_\_

Principal's E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

(Area Code) District Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Alternate contact person and telephone number for winter break: \_\_\_\_\_

*I have reviewed the information contained in this application and, to the best of my knowledge, it is complete and accurate. I further certify that the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) does not have any outstanding findings of civil rights statute violations by the school or district which may affect the school and that there are no pending law suits by the Department of Justice against the district alleging that the school, or the district as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clauses.*

Principal's Name (Please Print) \_\_\_\_\_

District/Area Superintendent's Name (Please Print) \_\_\_\_\_

Principal's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

District/Area Superintendent's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(or Authorized Designee)

List the names of your school's California **state** legislative representatives:

State Senator \_\_\_\_\_

State Assembly Member \_\_\_\_\_

## Section I – Background and Demographic Data

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Representatives of all relevant stakeholder groups (including administrators, teachers, other school staff, students, families, business partners, and community representatives) should be involved in the preparation of the application. Include the individuals, and their titles, that were involved in the preparation of the application, listing the primary author/editor first. If necessary, add an additional page and please label your attachment as “2a.”

Name	Position/Title

If your school is selected to receive a site visit, the review team will expect some of these school community members to participate in site visit interviews and to be familiar with the contents of the application.

## Section I – Background and Demographic Data

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### DISTRICT INFORMATION

1. Total number of students (K–12) enrolled in the district: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Number of schools in the district: \_\_\_\_\_ Elementary schools  
\_\_\_\_\_ Middle schools  
\_\_\_\_\_ High schools (comprehensive & continuation)  
\_\_\_\_\_ Charter schools  
\_\_\_\_\_ Total schools

### SCHOOL INFORMATION

1. Category that best describes the area where your school is located:  
☐ Urban or large central city    ☐ Suburban with characteristics typical of an urban school  
☐ Suburban    ☐ Small city or town in a rural area    ☐ Rural
2. When was the school built? \_\_\_\_\_  
Date(s) of any major renovation or improvements. \_\_\_\_\_  
Briefly describe the nature of the renovation/improvement(s) if applicable.
3. How long has your leadership staff been at your school?  
Principal \_\_\_\_\_ Assistant Principal (AP) \_\_\_\_\_ AP #2 \_\_\_\_\_  
AP #3 \_\_\_\_\_ Other (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_
4. Is your school a Charter School?    ☐ Yes    ☐ No
5. Is your school a Magnet School?    ☐ Yes    ☐ No  
  
If yes, indicate the percent of your school's student population coming from outside the school's traditional attendance area. \_\_\_\_\_ %  
  
Please provide a brief description. If necessary, attach an additional page and please label your attachment as page "3a".



## Section I – Background and Demographic Data

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6. Briefly describe any research projects, grant awards, articles, and special awards of which your school has been the subject or recipient in the last five years. If necessary, attach an additional page and please label your attachment as page “4a”.

7. Number of students currently enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in your school:

4<sup>th</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ 5<sup>th</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ 6<sup>th</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ 7<sup>th</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ 8<sup>th</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ 9<sup>th</sup> \_\_\_\_\_  
 Total enrollment \_\_\_\_\_

8. Racial/ethnic composition of the students in your school as reported on the most recent CBEDS Report:

_____ % American Indian or Alaska Native	_____ % Hispanic or Latino
_____ % Asian	_____ % African American
_____ % Pacific Islander	_____ % White (not Hispanic)
_____ % Filipino	_____ % Multiple or no response
	_____ Total enrollment

9. Please indicate the languages spoken and number of EL and FEP students for each as reported on the most recent Form R-30LC (Language Census).

<u>Primary Language</u>	<u># of Students</u>	<u>Primary Language</u>	<u># of Students</u>
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

If necessary, attach an additional page and please label your attachment as page “4a”.

## Section I – Background and Demographic Data

10. Students identified for special education services: \_\_\_\_\_ %  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Number served

If there are Special Education students (with IEPs) who attend your school from other areas within the district or county, if your Special Education students are served at another site, or if there are any other special circumstances please provide a brief explanation. If necessary, attach an additional page and please label your attachment as page “5a”. Include reference to this issue in your response to Question 8—*Support for Student Learning: Students At-Risk and With Special Needs*.

11. What was the average absentee rate (percent) of all students in your school during the 2001-02 school year? \_\_\_\_\_

12. What was your school’s suspension rate (percent) for the 2001-02 school year? \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete the following table, including the number of students suspended in each category.

Racial/Ethnic Composition and Gender of the Student	2001-2002 Enrollment		In-School Suspensions		Out-of-School Suspensions	
	Number	%	Number of Students Suspended for 1 to 10 Days	Number of Students Suspended for 10+ Days	Number of Students Suspended for 1 to 10 Days	Number of Students Suspended for 10+ Days
American Indian or Alaska Native						
Asian						
Pacific Islander						
Filipino						
Hispanic or Latino						
African American						
White (not Hispanic)						
Multiple or no Response						
Female						
Male						

Write a paragraph that describes your school’s suspension data. If necessary, attach an additional page and please label your attachment as page “5a”.

## Section I – Background and Demographic Data

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13. Is your school a multi-track or year-round school? \_\_\_\_\_

14. Please attach a single sheet schedule that describes how your instructional minutes are organized for each grade level (periods per day/block scheduling, self-contained, departmentalized). Please label your attachment as page “6a”.

15. Indicate the number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below.

	<u>Full-time Staff</u>	<u>Part-time Staff</u>
Administrator(s)	_____	_____
Classroom teachers (Credentialed)	_____	_____
Classroom teachers (Waivers)	_____	_____
Counselors	_____	_____
Credentialed librarian	_____	_____
Technology/media technicians	_____	_____
Nurse	_____	_____
Psychologist	_____	_____
Paraprofessionals (classroom aides, health care staff, etc.)	_____	_____
Resource teachers/specialists	_____	_____
Support staff (security, yard duty, maintenance, cooks, and other classified employees)	_____	_____
Total staff	_____	_____

16. Indicate the number of classrooms that a site visit team would observe if your school is selected as a statewide nominee.

_____ Regular	_____ Special Day classrooms
_____ RSP	_____ EL
_____ Computer Labs	_____ Science Labs

Arts, Drama, and or Music classrooms (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Identify others if applicable \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Total classrooms

## Directions to Your School

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If your school is selected to receive a site visit, the review team members will need directions to your school.

\_\_\_\_\_  
County

\_\_\_\_\_  
District

\_\_\_\_\_  
School

\_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
City and Zip Code

\_\_\_\_\_  
Principal

\_\_\_\_\_  
School Phone Number

Name and location of the closest airport: \_\_\_\_\_

Identify major freeway access: \_\_\_\_\_

In the space provided below, please provide detailed travel directions indicating the surface streets that lead to your school.

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## Section II – School Synopsis

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On a separate sheet of paper, please provide a brief, colorful description of your school. If your school is selected for honors, your *School Synopsis* will be made available to the press. The evaluators will not rate the summary statement, but it will provide them with important background information for understanding your school. Limit your summary to one (1) page and number it page “8”. Include the school name centered above your summary as well as the principal’s name and telephone number in the upper right-hand corner of the page.

Highlight the main topics in Section III. Summarize your strengths and accomplishments focusing on what makes your school a unique and successful place. Omit testimonials about how much you deserve the award. Use space wisely, as you would for a news release.

## Section III – Program Criteria: School Programs and Processes

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Limit your **total response** for the main narrative section, questions 1-10, to **fourteen (14) pages**. Space not used for one question may be used for others. Please refer to the formatting instructions for additional technical specifications. Make sure that your description is an accurate portrayal that can be validated in a site visit if your school is selected as a statewide nominee.

In all of the following sections, *school community* is meant to include: *administrators, teachers, other school staff, family members, business partners, community members, and where appropriate, students*. Writers should be able to discuss those groups when responding to questions that ask about *school community*. Application evaluators will expect to see them mentioned.

### STANDARDS, ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

#### Vision and Standards

1. Describe the process used by your school community for developing a common vision of what students should know and be able to do by the end of 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Indicate the roles played by members of the school community. Discuss how the school and district are implementing state academic and other standards. Describe how the school and district evaluate and use state and local assessment data to adjust the school’s improvement plan. Describe how results are communicated to the community. *Statewide measures include: the Academic Performance Index (API); Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) system (Stanford 9 and California Standards Tests, including the 7<sup>th</sup> grade writing assessment); and, California English Language Development Test (CELDT). Local outcomes should include data from standards-based benchmark assessments for district-defined priorities.*

## Section III – Program Criteria: School Programs and Processes

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### Student Assessment

2. Describe how local, school, and classroom assessment information are linked to statewide assessment in order to improve student performance and to ensure progress toward schoolwide improvement. Describe how the school is able to monitor and report students' learning of standards, both schoolwide and for individual students. Discuss how teacher in all departments/disciplines use assessment information to modify curriculum and instruction. Provide examples of assessment in English/language arts (E/LA) and mathematics, including but not limited to: analysis of student work, writing samples, district-developed assessments, criterion-referenced assessments, interdepartmental/discipline collaboration, vertical articulation, etc. Provide examples of opportunities students have to evaluate their work against the standards. Describe how families are informed about their students' efforts in achieving standards. *Assessment methods may include, but should not be limited to: writing samples, teacher and student evaluation of student work (rubrics, project scoring guides, portfolios, grades); district-developed assessments, criterion-referenced assessments, and assessments linked to instructional materials; and, publishers' norm-referenced tests.*

### ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

#### Curriculum and Instructional Practices

3. Describe how your school provides a comprehensive core curriculum in all subject areas that is articulated across grade levels and with feeder elementary schools and destination high schools, where possible. Discuss how your curriculum is aligned or is being aligned to local and state standards. Use examples from English/language arts and mathematics to describe curriculum alignment and articulation. Describe how standards-aligned thematic units are designed and implemented by teams of teachers. Discuss how all students are provided with a variety of learning experiences. Describe the selection of standards-based instructional materials. Discuss planning underway to align curriculum to standards in order to prepare students for the California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE). **NOTE: THIS SECTION WILL BE WEIGHTED DOUBLE IN THE SCORING PROCESS.**

#### Teacher Professionalism

4. Discuss how professional development prepares all teachers, administrators, and other staff to help students achieve local and state standards through effective standards-based lessons in all curricular areas, particularly in English/language arts (E/LA) and mathematics. Describe how professional development enhances the understanding of student developmental needs. Describe how professional development programs are selected and evaluated. Discuss the processes that support teacher professionalism. Describe the opportunities that are available for teachers to collaborate, broaden their knowledge, participate in decision making, and share information with teachers from other grade levels. Discuss professional development provided for other school personnel. Discuss how new teachers are selected and supported. *Professional development activities should reflect awareness: of Designs for Learning, the California Standards for the Quality and Effectiveness of Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment Programs, and Taking*

## **Section III – Program Criteria: School Programs and Processes**

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*Center Stage. Discussion may also include, but is not limited to: leadership academies; subject matter projects; networks and consortia; professional organizations; the Bilingual Teacher Training Program; teacher education institutes; and, peer assistance and review.*

### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

#### **Educational Technology and Library Media Services**

5. Describe the library media services that support teaching and learning. Describe your plan for technology use at the school site and the ongoing process of integrating technology into the total school program. Include accommodations to ensure appropriate technical assistance for staff and students. Discuss how professional development needs of staff are met, both in terms of enhancing technology skills and in integration of technology into the curriculum. Describe how students, certificated staff, library media teachers, and other support staff are provided with information and learning resources. Include examples of technology and library usage data (*e.g., the number of computers, frequency of usage, population of users, use of the Internet, book circulation, etc.*) Describe the extent of electronic networking infrastructure throughout the site and beyond. Describe how the technology and library media services have contributed to improved student achievement.

### **SUPPORT FOR STUDENT LEARNING**

#### **School Culture**

6. Describe the culture of the school and how it supports student success in achieving standards. Discuss how the school demonstrates the values of an exemplary middle school including such key elements as instructional strategies appropriate for the developmental characteristics of young adolescents, class scheduling issues, and exploratory curricula. Describe opportunities for students to provide service to their communities and to engage in organized service learning experiences. Discuss how the school culture promotes positive character traits and good citizenship. Describe the strategies used to ensure that students feel a sense of connection to the school and do not "fall through the cracks."

#### **Comprehensive Academic and Guidance Counseling**

7. Discuss how your school provides academic counseling and guidance for middle-level students and their families. Describe the processes in place to encourage all students to aspire to academic success. Describe the roles teachers and other staff play in providing academic advisement. Provide examples of how personal learning plans are developed for students. Describe the strategies used to ensure that students are prepared for a broad range of academic and career options in high school, including special programs to support students from groups traditionally under-represented in colleges and universities. (*e.g., Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID), the College Readiness Program (CRP), etc.*)

## Section III – Program Criteria: School Programs and Processes

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### Students At-Risk and With Special Needs

8. Discuss the identification and assessment process of students at-risk and with special needs at your school. Describe the programs and strategies used by the school to ensure access to and success in the regular curriculum. Discuss how student differences are valued as assets. Discuss the programs and strategies used by the school to assist English learners (ELs). Describe support for school staff to assist students with disabilities to achieve individualized education plan (IEP) goals, progress in the regular curriculum, and be educated with non-disabled students. Describe the extended learning activities.  
*Students at-risk and with special needs include but are not limited to: gifted and talented students; English learners; students from culturally and ethnically diverse families; students not achieving their identified learning potential; students with attendance problems, discipline problems, family-related issues, health-related issues, and nutrition-related issues; students with mobility/ transfer issues; and, students receiving special education services.*

### Safe and Healthy School and Coordinated Services

9. Describe how your school ensures a safe and secure learning environment and supports student health. Discuss programs that promote healthy student behaviors and programs that keep the school free from drugs, alcohol, tobacco, crime, and violence. Describe how the school culture and staff promote appropriate student behavior to protect the safety of all, including collaboration with local law enforcement. Discuss how the school supports the coordination of health and social services for students and families in the community. Describe how the school's physical condition reflects the learning environment of an exemplary school.

### FAMILY PARTICIPATION AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

10. Describe the strategies used by your school to engage its families and communities. Describe how members of the school community work together to support student learning, and how families are assisted to be collaborative partners in the education of their children. Describe how the school communicates with families and encourages communication from them, including those who are not fluent in English. Describe school/community partnerships and how community and family resources are used to support student learning, strengthen the curriculum and expand student learning. If the student population is culturally diverse, discuss how the diversity of students' families is acknowledged.  
*Community partnerships may include, but are not limited to: other middle schools, elementary and high schools; post-secondary institutions; community agencies; law enforcement; service and fraternal organizations; associations and clubs; businesses and industries; labor; government agencies (e.g., state and federal forestry, wildlife, and agricultural agencies, BLM, Caltrans, National Weather Service, etc.); faith-based organizations; colleges and universities; and, other entities unique to the area.*